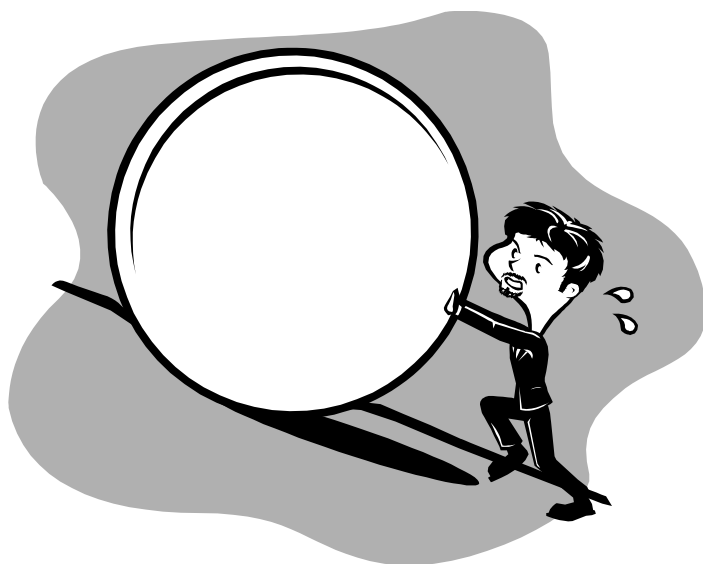


Barriers to Core Resources for Positive Youth Development



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Barriers to Core Resources for Positive Youth Development

Young people (ages 6-21) are 23% of the population but 100% of the future. They need critical resources **now** to build a better future. We, as a nation, know what children need and deserve to grow-up as healthy and productive citizens:

- Ongoing relationships with caring adults;
- Safe places with structured activities during non-school hours;
- Health and mental health;
- Marketable skills/competencies acquired through education and youth development; and
- Opportunities to give back through community service and civic participation.

Demonstrating the need to provide access to these resources: Why do we need youth development programs?

Even though some situations for young people are improving, resources are still lacking.

- Number of Younger Americans and Their Racial/Ethnic Composition
- Younger Americans' Family Structure
- Younger Americans Living in Poverty
- Younger Americans' Access to Health Care
- Younger Americans' Isolation
- Younger Americans and School
- Teenage Birth Rate
- Younger Americans' Participation in Volunteer Activities
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Number of Younger Americans and Their Racial/Ethnic Composition

- In 1999, there were 70,199,400 children under the age of 18. ¹
- US Census projects for the year 2000, there will be 59.5 million children and youth between the ages of 5 to 19 and another 18.4 million young people between the ages of 20 to 24. (Population Estimates Program, Population Division, US Census Bureau, Washington, DC)
- The US Census projects that in 2000: 22.7 million children under the age of six, 24.1 million children 6-11, and 23.5 million children ages 12-17 for a total of 70.4 million children under the age of 18. ¹⁰
- In 1999, children under the age of 18 were 65% White, 15% Black, 16% Hispanic, 4% Asian Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian. ¹⁰
- Five percent (2.4 million) of all school-aged children ages 5-17 speak a language other than English at home and have difficulty with English. This number is up from 1.7 million children in 1979. ¹⁰

Younger Americans' Family Structure

(Households for related family members)

- The number of single parent headed families (11 million) has risen 13% since 1990. ¹
- Of the 11 million single parent households, 2.1 million were father only and 8.9 million were mother only. ¹
- In 1999, 68% of all American children lived with two parents, down from 77% in 1980. ¹⁰
- In 1999, almost a quarter (23%) of children lived with only their mothers, 4% lived only with their fathers, and 4% lived with neither of their parents. ¹⁰
- 46% of children in female-headed families were poor in 1998. ¹
- The percentage of families with children headed by a single parent increased from 24% in 1990 to 27% in 1997. ¹

- In 1997, 65% of poor children lived in households that did not include their biological father, compared to 25% of children who were not poor.¹
- Older children were less likely to live with two parents - 66% of children ages 15-17 compared with 74% of children under age 5 and 71% of those 5 to 14.¹⁰
- 55% of the children ages 6-12 are living with working parents.⁴
- Between 1980 and 1998, the percentage of children living in two-parent families in which both the mother and father worked full time all year increased from 17% to 31%.¹⁰
- Children living with single mothers who are employed increased from 33% in 1993 to 44% in 1998.¹⁰

Younger Americans Living in Poverty

OMB official poverty measure is \$13,133 for a family of one adult and two children in 1998, while the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$16,660 annual income.

- In 1998, 18% of children lived in a household with an income below the relevant poverty threshold. This rate is down from 19% in 1997 and the most recent high of 22% in 1993.¹⁰
- In 1998, 12.6 million children were living in poverty.(18% of 69.9 million children under the age of 18 living in the US in 1998)^{5 and 10}
- In 1998, 9% of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 46% in female-householder families.¹⁰
- In 1998, 10% of white, non-Hispanic children were living in poverty compared with 36% of black children and 34% of Hispanic children.¹⁰
- Growth in the number of poor children in recent years has not been due to welfare-dependent families but the rise in the number of working-poor families.¹
- The number of children living in working-poor families increased from 4.3 million in 1989 to 5.8 million in 1998. (working-poor families are defined as families where at least one parent worked 50 or more weeks a year and the family income was below the poverty level.¹

- From a study of 17 developed countries, the US had the highest child poverty at 22%; the next highest, Australia, was nearly 50% lower at 14%. ²
- UN study showed among industrialized countries only the Russian Federation had a higher poverty rate than the US. ³
- Compared with children living in families above the poverty line, children living below the poverty line are more likely to have difficulty in school ¹⁶ to become teen parents ¹⁷ and, as adults, to earn less and be unemployed more frequently ¹⁶.

Younger Americans' Access to Health Care

- In 1998, 85% of children had health insurance coverage. This rate has fluctuated around 86% since 1987. ¹⁰
- 11.1 million or 15% of all children had no health insurance during 1998. ¹⁰
- The proportion of children covered by private health insurance has decreased in recent years, from 74% in 1987 to 68% in 1998. During that same time the proportion of children covered by government health insurance has grown from 19% to 23%. (Total percentage of children with insurance is not 85% because some children have both private and government insurance.) ¹⁰
- Hispanic children are less likely to have health insurance than either white, non-Hispanic or black children. In 1998, 70% of Hispanic children were covered by health insurance while 89% of white, non-Hispanic children and 80% of black children were covered. ¹⁰
- Children ages 6-11 are more likely to be insured than those 0-5 or 12 to 17. Private health insurance increases with the age of the child, while government insurance decreases with the age of the child. ¹⁰
- In 1997, 7% of children had no usual source of health care, according to a parent or household adult. This rate is down from 8% in 1993. ¹⁰
- Young people 18 to 24 years old were more likely than other age groups to lack coverage - 30% were without coverage in 1998. ¹⁸

Younger Americans' Isolation

(lack the necessary communication and transportation links
to connect with support networks and systems)

- 84% of households with children in very poor urban neighborhoods do not have a computer.¹
- 20% do not even have a phone.¹
- Half of the children in low-income urban areas live in households that do not have a car (13% all children).¹

Younger Americans and School

- In 1997, 10% of young people 16-19 were high school dropouts. This is the same percentage as found in 1990.¹
- Dropout rates for teens 16-19 vary by location and race/ethnicity.¹
- Teens in central cities (14%) were twice as likely to dropout as suburban teens (7%). Rural teens dropped out at the rate of 8%. In high poverty urban areas the rate jumped to 20%.
- 20% of Hispanics, 7% of whites, and 13% of African-American teens drop out of school.
- 1.3 million (or 9%) young people 16-19 are not attending school nor are they employed. This is down from 11% in 1991.¹
- Most of the decline in the proportion of youth not enrolled in school or working occurred among young women, a drop from 13% in 1991 to 9% in 1999. However, young women continue to be more likely than young men to be detached from these activities.¹⁰
- Older youth, ages 18-19, are three times as likely to be detached from school and work as youth ages 16-17. In 1999, 13% of youth 18-19 were neither enrolled in school nor working compared with 4% of youth ages 16-17.¹⁰
- Detachment from school or the workforce, especially if it lasts for several years, puts youth at increased risk of having lower earnings and a less stable employment history than their peers who stayed in school and/or secured jobs.

- In 1999, 85% of young adults 18 to 24 had completed high school either with a diploma or alternative credential (such as a GED). The high school completion rate has remained rather stable since 1980 when it was 84%. ¹⁰
- As compared to students in 1989, students in 1995 were more likely to report that they had experienced violent victimization, could obtain drugs, and were aware of street gangs at school. ⁶
- Student reports of drug availability, street gang presence, and gun presence at school were all related to having experienced violent victimization at school. ⁶
- Nearly two-thirds of school-age children and youth live with a single employed parent or two parents who are both employed. Over 14 million children 6-11 and over 15 million children 12-17 live with employed parents. Nearly 80% of working parents are employed full-time. ⁷
- The best data available indicates that there are approximately 8 million children ages 5 to 14 who spend time without adult supervision on a regular basis. This number includes 4 million children between the ages of 5 and 12 and another estimated 4 million children ages 13 and 14. These figures rise markedly as children age. ⁷
- The National Institute on Out-of-School Time estimates that there are approximately 4 million latchkey children 13-14, for an estimated total of 7.5 million latchkey children ages 5-14. ⁷
- A 1998 US General Accounting Office report estimated that by the year 2002, the current number of out-of-school time programs for school-age children will meet as little as 25% of the demand in some urban areas. ⁸

Teenage Birth Rate

- Teen birth rates continue to drop. The birth rate for teenagers dropped by 3% between 1998 and 1999, to reach a rate of 49.6 births per 1,000 women ages 15-19. This is the lowest rate in the 60 years data has been kept on this topic. This rate is down 20% from the most recent high in 1991. This report also found a drop in the number of births to unmarried teens. ²

Younger Americans' Participation in Volunteer Activities

- 55% of high school (9th through 12th grade) students participated in volunteer activities in 1999, up from 50% in 1996. ¹⁰
- 24% of youth participated one or two times in volunteer activities during the school year and 15% participated regularly up to 35 hours. In 1999, 16% of high school students performed 35 or more hours of service. ¹⁰
- Students are much more likely to participate if their schools require and arrange the service. When their schools did so, 59% of 6th through 12th-grade students participated, compared with 29% when schools did neither. ¹⁰
- 46% of 18-24 year olds said they had volunteered in the past year, according to Independent Sector's *Giving and Volunteering in the United States 1999*. ¹⁹
- According to Independent Sector, in 1998 less than half (43%) of 18-24 year olds were asked to volunteer. Of that group, 87% volunteered. ¹⁹
- Youth who volunteer regularly are more confident in their ability to make public statements, have more political knowledge, and pay more attention to politics. ¹¹
- Other studies demonstrate additional benefits: youth learn to respect and to help others, and they develop leadership skills and a better understanding of citizenship. Teen volunteering also creates a behavior pattern that carries into adulthood. ¹²

Voting Behavior of Younger Americans

- Voting is a critical exercise of citizenship in a democracy. Measures of voting behavior of young adults may be seen as indicators of the level of youth commitment to the democratic process. ¹⁴
- In 1972, 58% of young adults 18-20 reported that they had registered to vote and 48% reported that they had voted. By 1996, 46% reported that they had registered, and 31% reported that they had voted. ¹⁴
- Family Service America reported that for the same time period (1972-1996), voter turnout among 18-to-24-year-olds had declined from 42% to 28%, while volunteerism among young Americans increased to a record 73%. ¹⁵

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